

FALLSTON COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES – MEETING OF NOVEMBER 24, 2015

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Fallston Community Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chairman Dave Williams. Other Board members present were Larry Keckler, Joyce Eaton and Bob Frisch.

Minutes from the September, 2015 meeting were approved after a motion by Bob Frisch and a second of the motion by Larry Keckler.

The Chairman announced that the guest speaker for the January, 2016 meeting would be William Amoss, Chief, Agricultural & Historic Preservation.

Guest Speaker Jeff Stratmyer, Chief Engineer for Roads and Bridges of the Harford County Department of Public Works, delivered a presentation regarding current bridge and road projects, and some of the projects planned for the next fiscal year. Mr. Stratmyer commented that funding capital projects is challenging because the funds allocated to such projects was significantly reduced beginning in 2009.

Mr. Stratmyer reported that recently completed and current bridge projects include Harford Creamery Road (recently completed), Macton Road, Wheel Road, Hess Road (recently completed), Watervale Road, and Jericho Road. The Watervale Road bridge replacement is behind schedule because of an abundance of rain in the early summer delayed preparatory work on the stream. Future planned bridge projects include a culvert on Carrs Mill Road, and bridge replacements on Green Road, New Park Road, Robinson Mill Road, Stafford Road, Glenville Road, and Abingdon Road. The Abingdon Road bridge project will present special challenges because it is the primary road used by the Abingdon Fire Company and cannot be closed for a long period of time. Mr. Stratmyer explained that bridges over 20 feet long are subsidized 80% with Federal funds. He also described some of the various construction techniques used for bridge projects, depending on the circumstances of the site.

Mr. Stratmyer reported that two new roundabouts are planned on Tollgate Road in the area of Plumtree Road, one of which will be paid in its entirety by the developer of a nearby apartment complex. Studies are also underway for possible roundabouts at Water Tower Way and Granary Roads, and Water Tower Way and Bynum Run Roads. Mr. Stratmyer indicated that the “mini” roundabout at Tollgate and MacPhail Roads is the busiest mini roundabout in the nation, handling approximately 20,000 vehicles daily. The construction cost for a mini roundabout is considerably less than a standard roundabout.

Other future projects include an upgrade of a portion of Tollgate Road (in the area of the veterinary clinic) and the resurfacing of a portion of Tollgate Road (in the area of the equestrian center) and the resurfacing of Singer Road.

Mr. Stratmyer indicated that his division also handles erosion and embankment repairs, culverts (approximately 3,000 in the county), sidewalks, traffic safety, dirt road stabilization, guardrails and snow removal. There are 77 snow emergency routes in the county, each taking approximately 3 hours to run the entire route.

Captain Meckley of the Harford County Sheriff's Office made a brief presentation regarding crime statistics in the Fallston area for the period October 23, 2015 through November 23, 2015. During this period there were 7 thefts, 1 burglary and 1 assault. Calls for service are up 22% over last year but 2015 includes animal control calls and traffic stops, whereas 2014 does not. Animal Control was moved within the Sheriff's Office this year, and Sheriff Gahler now includes traffic stops in crime statistics.

Captain Meckley also reported that there have been 179 heroin overdoses in the county so far this year, 24 of which were fatal. Four of the overdoses were in Fallston. Deputies have saved 23 lives by administering the drug Narcan. Victims of overdoses ranged in age from 16 to 58, 126 male and 53 female, and all but 8 were Caucasian.

Andrew Tress, representing County Executive Barry Glassman, updated the Board on the new county website, and provided an update on a community complaint that was discussed at the July Board meeting.

Jessica Blake, representing Councilman Woods, reported on renovation progress at the Fallston Mall, and the new businesses being developed at Route 1 and Milton Avenue. The Waffle House is expected to open soon. Due to community concerns, it is expected that the only entrance to the Milton Avenue community will be from Harford Road. No entrance will be permitted from the Route 1 end of the community. This will limit traffic for the new businesses going through the community.

Susan Sapp, representing the County Council, commented on recent Council business.

Bob Frisch, a School Board member reported on the fire at the school system's annex building in Hickory. The building is used for storage and by the Facilities Department. The amount of loss had not yet been established but it will result in considerable inconvenience for the school system.

Mr. Frisch reported that the school system budget will be presented in December. Six community input sessions will be held.

Mr. Frisch informed the Board that media will be filing reports the following day regarding potential school closings in the county. The reports are based on a comment made by the County Council President at a recently meeting. While no formal discussions have been held, hypothetical school closures include Joppatown High and Havre de Grace High. A closing of Joppatown High would likely impact Fallston High.

Finally, Mr. Frisch reported that the construction of the new Youths Benefit Elementary School is proceeding on schedule.

Dave Williams briefly discussed Council Bill 15036, which seeks to change the requirements for Mixed Office zoning. Given that the bill does not appear to have a direct impact on the Fallston Community, no further discussion was held.

Dave Williams, representing the Fallston Volunteer Fire Company, reported on a recent house fire in Fallston. He also provided fire safety tips for the holiday season, and reported that Santa will be making his usual rounds on a Fallston fire truck, beginning December 2. Santa volunteers are needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 after a motion by Bob Frisch.